

DRAFT:GACarver/mee:28May75

Honorable Clarence D. Long  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Long:

Your inquiry to the Secretary of State regarding the article by Mr. Sam Adams in the May 1975 issue of Harper's magazine has been referred to me. I am pleased to have the opportunity to provide my views on this matter.

In broad terms, Mr. Adams charges that the Central Intelligence Agency deliberately suppressed Mr. Adams' views of enemy troop strength in South Vietnam, and conspired with elements of the Department of Defense to produce false and misleading, but politically acceptable, estimates of Vietnamese Communist strength.

These charges are not true and the record does not support them.

During the period discussed in Mr. Adams' article, U.S. intelligence analysts of North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troop strength were continually confronted with the basic problem of fragmentary evidence. The evidence available consisted largely of captured Communist documents and the results of prisoner interrogations, augmented by informant and agent reports. Much of this evidence was sketchy. Even that which looked solid on first inspection had to be carefully

evaluated and often proved to be much less solid than initial appearances would suggest. (Communist officials reporting to higher command echelons, for example, frequently exaggerated their accomplishments in developing guerrilla units, recruiting people for front groups or service units, etc.) Also, the evidence was inherently spotty. Analysts might have, for example, fairly hard information on Communist strength in several districts, but assessing the extent to which these districts were -- or were not -- representative of the 244-odd districts in all of South Vietnam inevitably involved the exercise of judgment.

Given the state and nature of the evidence available, there were -- inevitably -- wide variations in the assessments or conclusions on this subject developed by knowledgeable, ~~intelligence~~ US intelligence officers professionals. All of these conclusions had some evidentiary basis and none of them -- including Mr. Adams' -- could be proven accurate beyond reasonable doubt or legitimate argument.

By Mr. Adams' own account, his views could hardly have been considered suppressed. Indeed, he was afforded unusual opportunities to present them to his fellow analysts throughout the Intelligence Community and to the most senior officers in the CIA. In addition, Mr. Adams was able to

expound his views during a number of major attempts to resolve the differences within the U.S. Intelligence Community <sup>regarding</sup> ~~on~~ the size and strength of Communist forces in Vietnam. These attempts included interagency conferences held in Honolulu, Saigon and Washington, attended not only by representatives of the Washington Intelligence Community but also by representatives of CINCPAC and MACV. Mr. Adams also presented his views to various members of the National Security Council Staff and to several Congressmen and <sup>to</sup> members of the staffs of either individual Congressmen or various Congressional committees.

Mr. Adams' research in fact made a real contribution to our knowledge of enemy strength in South Vietnam and the results of that research did much to raise the United States Government's estimates of that strength. Nonetheless, some of Mr. Adams' conclusions were simply not accepted by his colleagues or superiors, not because his views were suppressed or regarded as politically unpalatable but because his colleagues -- after hearing detailed expositions of Mr. Adams' arguments -- were not persuaded by his logic or his evidence.

**P** The Agency's assessments in the late 1960s were based in substantial measure on Mr. Adams' work and did argue the case for higher figures than those employed by MACV and the

Defense Intelligence Agency. These CIA assessments were presented to the most senior levels of the United States Government, who were also apprised of the fact that there remained substantial differences of opinion within the Intelligence Community on these questions of Communist strength.

Mr. Admas' charges go to the very heart of the intelligence profession. One of the principal reasons why Congress established an independent Central Intelligence Agency in 1947 was to prevent departmental concerns and policy considerations from influencing national intelligence assessments. On the complex matter of assessing Communist strength in Vietnam, we scrupulously avoided consideration of the political impact of our judgments and constantly endeavored to provide the President and his senior advisors with the most objective conclusions we could develop, based on the best evidence and analysis attainable.

During 1968, two intensive, internal investigations were conducted within CIA to assess charges made at that time by Mr. Adams which were essentially similar to those expounded in his 1975 Harper's article. On the basis of

those inquiries' findings, I am personally satisfied that Mr. Adams had every reasonable opportunity to present his views and argue them in great detail; that the Agency officers who did not accept all of his conclusions were acting in light of their best professional reading of the evidence available -- which led them to conclusions at some variance with those of Mr. Adams -- and that the CIA officers and offices responsible for assessing the situation in Vietnam did extremely well in carrying out their responsibility for producing reliable and unbiased intelligence assessments.

Sincerely,

W. E. Colby

W. E. Colby  
Director

William Hyland

-- During the period of the events discussed in the Adams' article, Mr. Hyland served as the Chief of the Far East Staff of the Office of National Estimates. In March 1969 he was detailed to the Staff of the National Security Council. He remained in this position until he resigned from the CIA in January 1974 to assume the position of Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research in the Department of State.

Drexel Godfrey

-- Mr. Godfrey was serving as Director, Office of Current Intelligence during the period discussed in Mr. Adams' article. He resigned from this position, at his initiative, in June 1970. Mr. Godfrey currently is employed on the faculty of Rutgers University (Newark extension) where he is helping to run a program in public administration and urban affairs.

A.  
George Carver, Sr.

-- At the time of the events discussed in Mr. Adams' article, Mr. Carver served as the Director's Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs. He is currently serving as the Deputy to the Director of Central Intelligence for National Intelligence Officers.

Edward Proctor

-- Mr. Proctor served at the period under discussion as the Assistant Deputy Director for Intelligence. In May 1971 he assumed the position of Deputy Director for Intelligence which he still occupies. Mr. Proctor is the only one of the individuals named in the Adams' article who is still currently employed with the Agency that was charged with conspiring to suppress intelligence.

I am enclosing for your information a copy of a letter from Mr. Proctor to Senator Pell which was prepared in response to a query from the Senator asking Mr. Proctor to comment on the validity of the charges.

You also asked in your letter about the status of a number of individuals named in the Adams' article, both at the time of the incidents described by Mr. Adams and their current status.

These individuals are:

Admiral William F. Raborn, Jr.

-- Admiral Raborn was serving as the Director of Central Intelligence at the time mentioned in Mr. Adams' article. He resigned as Director of Central Intelligence on 30 June 1966. He currently has no connection with this Agency and is serving as a consultant to the Aerojet General Corporation in Washington, D. C.

R. J. Smith

-- Mr. Smith served as the Deputy Director for Intelligence at the time of the incidents described in Mr. Adams' article. He served in this capacity until May 1971 when he was assigned to the staff of the Director of Central Intelligence. After 1971 he served <sup>overseas</sup> in special assignments for the Director until he retired on 31 December 1973 in accordance with established Agency retirement policies.



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